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MIRANDA:  
A TOWN IDYL.

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A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

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Adapted for the Stage from "Miss Hitchcock's Wedding Dress."

By LUCY M. SCHLEY.

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*Affectionately Inscribed to Mrs. Edward Sanderson.*

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

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MIRANDA MAXWELL.

MISS HITCHCOCK.

LADY LESLIE.

LADY MARIA LESLIE—HER DAUGHTER,

MRS. GREEN—A LODGING-HOUSE KEEPER.

M<sup>ME</sup>. LA GAI—A FRENCH MODISTE.

MAID.

LADIES, ETC.

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ARTHUR CRESSINGHAM.

MR. GAUNT—AN ARTIST.

MR. HITCHCOCK—MISS HITCHCOCK'S FATHER.

FRANK BUCKLAND.

PAGE.

GENTLEMEN, COACHMAN, SERVANTS, ETC.

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*The Scene is laid in London, at the present time.*

# A TOWN IDYL.

## ACT FIRST—SCENE FIRST.

(*Little back parlor at Mrs. Green's lodging-house, littered with unmade dresses, sewing machine, cutting-board, dress hung over mirror, etc. Books on table; Canary and flowers in window. Door opens at back of stage, and Mrs. Green appears, with Mr. Gaunt—evidently showing him over the house.*)

MRS. GREEN.—'Taint no particular use showing you this 'ere hapartment, seeing 'taint to be let for love nor money—leastways, 'tis let for love already—(*aside*) bless their 'earts!—so can't be let for money. But I'm one of the kind as goes in for not doing things by 'alves, specially to first floor lodgers (*courtseys*), so you may as well look at this, along with the rest.

MR. GAUNT, (*adjusting spectacles and looking around*)—Hump! Much obliged, I'm sure! Queer place; looks like a dry goods shop struck by lightning. (*Sharply*)—Of course the female inhabitant is blind?

MRS. GREEN.—Bless us! What put that into your 'ead, sur!

MR. GAUNT, (*dryly*)—The looking-glass is covered up, that's all.

MRS. GREEN, (*aside, indignantly*)—There's a insinawatin' old bachelore for you! (*With dignity*)—You're mistaken, sur. The young ladies which occupy this apartment 'ave four as pretty and observin' eyes between 'em, as ever you've sot *your* spectacles onto! (*Chuckling aside*)—There's a insinewation for *him*!

MR. GAUNT, (*examining things*)—Hump! Young, are they? And from the looks of things, rather given over to the poms and vanities of life. Oh, woman, woman, in your hours of ease, to spend your time on things like these! And, apropos of poetry, here's some! (*Picks up books.*) Something "sweetly pretty," of course, or "deliciously wicked." (*Opens books.*) Hullo, what's this? Tennyson and Browning, with a pair of scissors for a mark in one, and a needle-case in the other; and, as I live, not a pencil-mark anywhere! Why they are a pair of prodigies, these lodgers of yours, Mrs. Green.

MRS. GREEN, (*severely*)—I'd thank you not to be calling names promiscuous, if you please, sur! Nobody shall call them two poor dears anything but the nicest mannered, industriousest young ladies that ever drew the breath o' life, as long as Sarah Green has a tongue to wag back! *Prodigals*, indeed! not if he was ten times a first floor lodger!

MR. GAUNT, (*politely*)—I beg ten thousand pardons, madam! I've no doubt they are ornaments to their sex, since you say so, and paragons of every virtue *but* neatness! Still you must admit that this room is not exactly ship-shape.

MRS. GREEN, (*hotly*)—And I'd like to know what sort of a room *anybody's* would be if they had to get up at six every morning, and sew, sew, till the eyes were like to drop out of their heads, the whole blessed day, month in and month out! To see the way them poor dears toil and moil to put the bare bread into their mouths, and them born ladies, too, which was used to everything most helegant 'till their pa died, is enough to draw tears from a marble mantle-piece—so it is! And many's the time I've choked up to see 'em a sitting down so cheerful and merry-like to a dinner as wouldn't 'ave been a square mouthful for my Johnny!

MR. GAUNT, (*embarrassed*)—I beg your pardon, ma'am—I'm sure I didn't mean to—I'd no idea of hurting your feelings.

MRS. GREEN—I don't suppose you had, sir, and I'm an old fool : and I 'ope you'll take no notice. But the fact is, I knew the young ladies before they were born—leustways when Miss Sophy wasn't *that* high ; as sweet a little miss as ever rode a pony no bigger than a dog, with long, yaller curls and round blue eyes—

MR. GAUNT, (*interjecting*)—By Jove ! What a phenomenon !

MRS. GREEN—*—*and it goes dreadfully agin the grain to see 'em a working just as if they hadn't lords and ladies for their kin-folk, and might be a riding in chariots if they wasn't so independent. (*Noise outside. Mrs. Green looks out at back door.*) There they are on the landing, now—Miss Sophy tired out, poor lamb, and going up to her bed-room ; and little Missy, just as chirp and twittery as if she hadn't sat up 'till past midnight, finishing off Miss Hitchcock's wedding dress. (*Hurriedly, pushing Mr. Gaunt towards R. D.*) Please to go out that door, sir, and don't let on as I took the liberty to bring you here ; Miss Sophy ain't accustomed to liberties !

MR. GAUNT, (*laughing*)—Hullo ! what an irresistible woman it is, to be sure !

[*Exit Mr. Gaunt, R. D. Enter Miranda, C. D., in walking costume, carrying a large paste-board box.*]

MIRANDA—Here I am at last, Mrs. Green, and here's a whole box-full of loveliness to finish the dress with. But we needn't have worked so hard, after all, for Mme. La Gai says the wedding is postponed again, and the dress won't be wanted for ever so long.

MRS. G. (*helping her off with her things*)—So now you can take a rest, Miss Mirandy, and save up the bloom in them pretty cheeks of yours.

MIRANDA, (*gaily*)—Rest ? What do I want rest for ? *I'm* never tired ! Its only poor sister Sophy who gets pale and worn out, and that's because she is always remembering. My maxim in life is—*Don't remember !* (*Beginning to open box and take out dress, flowers, etc.*) Why, do you know, at Mme. La Gai's, this afternoon, while she was decorating the show case, some customers came in and began to talk of the beautiful scenery in Brentfordshire, and especially a little lake they'd seen, with a tiny, white church on the bank, and a parsonage near it, covered with vines, and a winding path leading up the hill to the little cemetery, where the tall, stone cross shone in the sunset light. It was *our* home, Mrs. Green, and by that very cross George and Sophy parted, when he went to India, ten years ago. I saw poor sissy was *remembering*, for she turned so white, and staggered into a chair. Mme. La Gai saw it, too, and made her lie down, and brought her a glass of wine, and was just as good and kind as she could be. But, indeed, everybody is kind to *us*, I think !

MRS. G.—And I'd like to see the individdle who'd 'ave the 'eart to be anything else—to a smiling lamb like you !

MIRANDA, (*holding up wreath of flowers*)—There, did you ever see anything daintier than *that*, Mrs. Green ? It's just the very *poetry* of mantua-making ! I'm so glad Mme. La Gai gives us such pretty things to do. It's just like singing a song, or reading a verse from Tennyson—to put all these airy, exquisite things together. And then, it's a *wedding dress*, too, you know, for a happy bride to wear, on the very happiest day of all her life. Don't you like to think how pretty and shy she'll look, and how proud her husband will be of her ?

MRS. G. (*doubtfully*)—Well there are brides *and* brides, you know, Miss. Some are pictures to look at : and some, again, pucker up your face like lemons, they're so awful sour. They *do* say Miss Hitchcock is of the puckerin' kind !

MIRANDA, (*earnestly*)—Now don't say *that*, Mrs. Green ; it really hurts me to have you say that ! I've thought of her so much while I've been making her wedding dress, that I've really grown to love her. And I don't believe it, either ! Mme. La Gai said she was quite young, and her lover, Mr. Cressing-

ham, is the most talented and handsome young gentleman in London; and they've been engaged ever so long. So, even if she is not a beauty, she must look young and happy, and happiness in a face is the prettiest thing there is, you know.

MRS. G.—Well, I never see'd her but once, in church, and it *may* have been dyspepsy, or perhaps them stained glass windows, which gave her a blue forehead and a yellor nose, and striped her chin, and wasn't generally becoming: but she struck *me* as being the most *oninwithn'* young person I'd ever had the bad fortune to see. But as for young Mr. Cressingham, he may be very handsome, and all that, but for my part, I haven't much opinion of *money seekers*!

MIRANDA—What do you mean, Mrs. Green?

MRS. G.—Oh, my meaning's plain enough! Miss Hitchcock *mayn't* be pretty, or loveable, but then she's got £50,000 to her fortune, and that's a beautifier to most men. Phew! I hate such marriages! They *give* me a bad taste in my mouth!

MIRANDA—Poor thing, poor thing! I'm fonder of her than ever, now! Don't you suppose if we make the dress *very* pretty and becoming, it may help her to win her husband's heart?

MRS. G.—Oh, as for that, it's little she cares about *hearts*, I reckon. My cousin is maid to Miss Hitchcock, and she says it's an even bargain—he's marrying her for her money, and she's marrying him because it's fun to lead him around, like a bear at a show, and make all the other young ladies envious. And a mighty cross bear he is too, sometimes, and cuts up uncommon rough, when she snubs him before folks.

MIRANDA, (*with dignity*)—Please don't tell me anything more your cousin may have seen, Mrs. Green. I don't like to spy into people's secrets, (*Mrs. Green turns away, offended; Miranda springs after and embraces her.*) There, I did not mean to offend you, you dear, kind friend, you! I only meant that perhaps Miss Hitchcock wouldn't like to have us discuss her affairs so freely. Please don't look *criss cross* at me!

MRS. G. (*pleasantly*)—There, there,—my heart couldn't hold anger agin you any more than a seive would hold beer! But it's time to be off to my kitchen. Nancy is that stupid she never can dish up proper, without me, and I left the front floor a, clamoring for their suppers. Besides, there's Mr. Gaunt, a new gent., came this afternoon, and he took the first floor and paid me down a week's rent in a handsome way, that's made me think a devilled kidney is a compliment he'd appreciate; so I'm off to cook it. Now don't 'ee, Miss, sit up 'till all hours. Go to bed at once, like a sensible lamb, do.

MIRANDA—Oh, but I couldn't, possibly! I've coaxed sister off for a good long rest, and just as soon as these flowers are tacked on, I'm going to give myself a real treat with Tennyson. Oh, how good it was of him to publish himself at last for six shillings, so even I could get him for my own!

MRS. G.—Lord, Lord! And to think of all them books in your pa's study!

MIRANDA—But I *don't* think of them; and you mustn't either. It's a sin to remember, when it makes us sad! Good night! Good night! (*Seizing Tennyson.*) I'm going to have *such* a treat!

MRS. G.—Good night! you little sunbeam, you! [*Exit Mrs. Green, c. d.*]

MIRANDA, (*spreading out dress and looking at it*)—How lovely it is; all ripples and shimmer, like shining snow! Only happy young things should wear a dress like that. A heavy heart could not bear the weight of it, for all it's so airy and light. And I am young, too! How strange it must seem to be young, in satin and lace. *This (smoothing her own dress)* is mousline delaine! (*Takes up satin dress.*) And it's just my height. Sophy said Miss Hitchcock's figure was just like mine. Suppose,—suppose? (*laughs*) why not? It wouldn't do anybody any harm. I was going to read a poem to-night,—why not be one,—for a little bit of a minute? Sophy's asleep; (*tries door,*) the door's locked,—I will! (*Steps into l. d., puts on white skirts, etc., then puts on wedding dress and walks up and down, admiring train. Business.*) Now I'm



Mrs. Arthur Cressingham, *nee* Miss Hitchcock,—no, I'm myself, as I'd like to be! (*Uncovers mirror and looks at herself.*) Oh, you pretty creature! oh, you darling! how I love you! (*Kisses herself in glass. Business.*) But, dear me! I'm like a peacock, with these black shoes on; (*begins to take off shoes,*) they don't harmonize, at all; they are a false quantity in the measure, and poetry mustn't have false quantities; (*opens drawer,*) but here are some white satin shoes; I almost forgot sissy had them, and so has she, I suppose; and here's the party-cloak she wore to the county-ball, so many years ago; dear, dear, how dreadful it must be to have things happen years and years ago! And here are poor mamma's diamonds! How lucky that sissy would'n't sell them that hard winter when work was so scarce. Now just wait, you silly, ridiculous creature, you, till I finish your toilet! (*While putting on diamonds soft waltz music is heard. She stops and listens.*) Oh, it's a party in the grand house next door. (*Turns down the lamp and lifts curtain from window, standing on one side; strong light from without falls on her figure. Moving figures seen beyond. Tableau.*) Lady Gregory lives there, and they are having a grand ball. How happy and bright they look. See them smile and bow. There's a young girl in white; (*suddenly,*) why, I'm in white, too; I'm dressed just as they are; I might run in among them and laugh, and talk, and be happy, just as they are; (*claps her hands and laughs,*) why not? What fun it would be, just to run down our steps and up theirs, and go to a party at last; a real party, like you read of in books! Nobody would know,—I'd only stay a minute,—and it would be something to remember forever and ever, that *wouldn't* make me sad. Shall I, shall I? (*A loud strain of music.*) Oh, I must; it's fairy-land, and it's calling me,—“the horns of elf-land, faintly blowing,”—I must, I must! (*Exit hurriedly, l. d. Curtain falls.*)

(*During the necessary interlude the orchestra plays soft waltz music, without stopping.*)

#### ACT FIRST—SCENE SECOND.

(*Ball-room in Lady Gregory's house; bay window opening on balcony at rear, hung with heavy curtains; Lady Gregory receiving guests in left corner of stage; couples in full evening dress, promenading in rear; Miss Hitchcock seated in right hand corner, alone, looking off very haughtily; Mr. Cressingham standing farther back on same side, alone, looking in opposite direction, also haughtily; Lady Maria Leslie in center of stage, surrounded by her mother and several gentlemen, asking for dances, in pantomime; waltz music.*)

1ST GENTLEMAN, (*sauntering by with lady on arm*)—Put me down for a prance, Lady Maria.

LADY M. (*manishly, writing name on card*)—All right, Ned; No. 1, and mind you are here on time,—“No seats reserved after the first act,” you know. (*Gentleman writes name on card and walks off.*)

LADY M. (*to Mr. Buckland, who has asked for a dance, in pantomime*)—No, Frank, let me off this time; do, there's a good fellow! That last caracole of ours 'bout did me up; and you're as fresh as a daisy! I vow, it's awfully hard lives on us girls, the way you men have everything,—cigars, and cock-tails, and muscle, and everything!

LADY LESLIE, (*reprovingly*)—My dear!

LADY M. (*sharply*)—Now, mumsey, don't “my dear” me. You know it's the crowning sorrow of my life that I wasn't born a boy; and I'll never give over it, never! Come, Frank, give us your door knob and let's take a prow! (*Takes arm.*)

LADY L. (*shocked*)—My dear!



LADY M. (*gaily going off*)—Expressive, aint they, mumsey? Lady Claude Malvers invented “door-knob” instead of “jug-handle,” you know,—that’s played,—and I invented “prowl.” We consider ourselves quite literary characters on the strength of them, and are going to invent some more.

LADY L. (*helplessly*)—My dear! (*Lady M. and Mr. Buckland promenade round the stage in animated pantomimic conversation. Mr. Hitchcock joins Lady Leslie. Music plays. Lady M. and Mr. Buckland pause as they pass Miss Hitchcock. Music stops.*)

LADY M.—Enjoying yourself, as usual, I see, Hannah.

MISS HITCHCOCK, (*wearily*)—Yes, as usual, watching you all make fools of yourselves.

LADY M. (*sarcastically*)—Glad we’ve got such an appreciative audience, I’m sure; ain’t you, Mr. Buckland? Can’t you induce Mr. Cressingham to come and help you make a fool of *yourself*, Hannah, dear? You don’t know what fun it is.

MISS H. (*coldly*)—Thanks. I’m not ambitious of learning,—“where ignorance is bliss,” you know.

LADY M.—Thank the Lord, our ideas of bliss differ, then! (*To partner, moving off,*) Don’t she look like a female Robinson Crusoe, cast away on that desert island of a sofa?

MR. BUCKLAND—That was rather a hard hit you gave her, Lady Maria. They do say Mr. Cressingham is not particularly strong in the role of Romeo.

LADY M. (*shrugging shoulders*)—Lord, Lord! Don’t expect miracles of a man. Think of her as Juliet! (*Both laugh and music recommences. As they reach Lady Leslie, music stops. They pause.*)

LADY M. (*aside to Mr. Buckland*)—There’s command in the maternal optic. What’s up now? (*Mr. Hitchcock advances towards her.*) Alas, and alack! Here’s my antediluvian adorer, toddling along on his rickety old pins. Away with you, Francis, my boy. You’re only ensign in the Guards, and here’s Monsieur Moneybags, looking out for a wife.

MR. B. (*holding her hand earnestly*)—Do you really mean me to go, Lady Maria?

LADY M. (*gaily, withdrawing hand*)—Do I really like diamonds, and Paris dresses, and plenty of chocolate creams? Yes, Mr. Buckland, I really mean you to go. There, don’t pout and tug at that pretty moustache. It looks impressive, but the ink is coming off on your glove. There, take a little tete-a-tete with Miss Hitchcock yonder, and make my cousin Arthur jealous. He, he, he! (*Turns towards Mr. Hitchcock.*)

MR. B. (*looking after her*)—Spiteful, heartless, fascinating little wretch. That’s the ticket, is it? But thank you for the suggestion, my lady. It’s not half a bad one. Frank Buckland likes angling for gold fish, too. (*Joins Miss Hitchcock, who receives him coldly, in pantomime.*)

MR. HITCHCOCK, (*pompously to Lady M.*)—Will the fairest of her sex make the humblest of her slaves unutterably happy?

LADY M. (*shortly*)—Will I dance with you, do you mean, Mr. Hitchcock? Of course.

LADY L. (*horrified*)—My dear!

MR. H.—Your daughter is so charmingly *naïve*, so frank, dear Lady Leslie, don’t rebuke her. She is never so bewitching as when she is just a little—ah—a trifle—um—what shall I call it?

LADY M.—*Rude*, I suppose you mean. I’m glad you’re so easily pleased; it saves me the trouble of pretending politeness. Ta, ta, mumsey. I’ll bring you back what’s left of me, to put together again. The galop is rather hard on flounces, you know. Of course you want to galop, Mr. Hitchcock? That was the fashionable dance before the flood, I believe. (*Lady Leslie holds up her hands in horror, and murmurs “My dear,” inaudibly. Mr. Hitchcock laughs uneasily, and leads Lady Maria off to rear of stage.*)

(*Mr. Cressingham advances a step towards centre of stage, looking earnestly at*

door. The couple on the sofa watch him, and see Miranda entering, in the wake of Mrs. Nesbitt and her two daughters. Sensation. Everybody looks at her, and a murmur of "beautiful," "charming," "who is she?" is heard. Miranda bows to Lady Gregory, as the others do, and still following Mrs. Nesbitt and daughters, advances to centre of stage. Several gentlemen join the group, asking the Misses Nesbitt for dances, but no one speaks to Miranda, who stands a little aloof, looking around with a surprised, delighted air, quite unconscious of admiration. Mr. Cressingham advances and offers his arm.)

LR. C.—May I have the pleasure? (At same instant Miss Nesbitt accepts a gentleman's arm, and Miranda follows her example, slipping her hand into Mr. C.'s arm.)

MR. C. (leading her to left side of stage)—You will excuse my not waiting for an introduction; I am Lady Gregory's nephew.

MIRANDA, (simply)—Are you, really?

MR. C.—Yes; so, although I have not had the pleasure, I thought I might venture to assume the privileges of the host.

MIRANDA, (looking around)—How beautiful it is!—the flowers, the music! Do you always live like this?

MR. C.—Yes, always; of course.

MIRANDA, (sighing)—You must be very happy.—How different lives are! And all the girls are pretty!

MR. C. (gallantly)—It is not in *that* you find the difference?

MIRANDA, (looking at him)—It is in *everything*. But, ah, you don't understand; how should you?

MR. C.—I think I do, though. This is your first ball, is it not?

MIRANDA, (gaily)—*That* it? Well, yes; it is my first ball.

MR. C.—So I see. I think, also, this is your first visit to London. You come from some delightful country home,—a parsonage, perhaps; (looking down at dress) no, not that; but some bright, flower-covered dwelling; and you are new to town and town gaities.

MIRANDA, (laughing)—Oh, you are a wizard, doubtless, and know ever and ever so much. But you can't guess where I come from, and why it is all so different to me,—so beautiful,—so wonderful,—just like a living, breathing poem!

MR. C. (looking around scornfully)—A poem! *This* a poem? It seems to me the dullest, most sordid prose in all the world.

MIRANDA, (musingly)—Can the lives in the different planets be more different than the different lives in this?

MR. C. (earnestly)—And can the *girls* in the different planets be more different than the different girls in this?

MIRANDA—Are they? But, no; girls are really all alike. It's only the dresses that make the difference.

MR. C. (looking puzzled)—As now?

MIRANDA, (confidentially)—*I*, for instance. Don't I look like them all now? And if you could only see me at home! Why, I had not the least idea what I was like.

MR. C. (smiling)—You mean in such splendid plumage! Still, at home, I don't suppose you are exactly a Cinderella?

MIRANDA—But that's just what I am,—a regular Cinderella.—Dear Cinderella! Don't you love her?

MR. C.—The Cinderella of the story-book, do you mean? or her lovely counterpart? (Aside.) Now for coquetry, of course.

MIRANDA, (gravely)—I think you are laughing at me, sir.

MR. C. (hurriedly)—Indeed, I am not. And have you the wicked sisters, too?

MIRANDA—Oh, dear, no! Poor, dear Sophy! What a shame! And yet,—yes; partly that; for she *would* be surprised to see me here.

MR. C.—Sophy being your sister, I suppose?

MIRANDA—Of course. I call her little mother, too, sometimes, because our real mother is dead, and she is so good to me, and so old,—at least ten years older than I am.

MR. C.—Poor old lady! She must hardly be able to totter around. (*Both laugh.*) And the slipper; don't forget the slipper! I am the Prince, of course.

MIRANDA—As to *that*,—see! (*Lifts skirt slightly and displays boots.*)

MR. C.—*Boots!* But never mind; I shall not need a slipper to trace you by. How I should like to find you some morning, among your cinders. May I try?

MATILDA, (*demurely*)—Oh, yes; certainly; you may try.

MR. C.—When next I call upon Mrs. Nesbitt, I shall go down the area steps into the kitchen.

MIRANDA—Will you? That will be very humble of you. But why?

MR. C.—*Why?* Why, to find Cinderella among her cinders.

MIRANDA, (*looking around 'till her eye falls upon Mrs. Nesbitt*)—Oh, I see,—yes,—Mrs. Nesbitt,—of course. (*Laughs softly. A couple waltz by them, the lady with her head nearly touching the gentleman's shoulder. Parody on fashionable waltzing.*)

MIRANDA—My gracious! She's sick; she's going to faint!

MR. C. (*alarmed*)—Who? What?

MIRANDA—That lady; see! Oh, why don't somebody go to her? He has to hold her up in his arms. Poor girl! How mortified she'd be, if she knew it. Why, her head is nearly on his shoulder! (*Watches them eagerly. Mr. C. watches her.*)

MR. C. (*aside*)—Is she acting? Or is it divine innocence?

MIRANDA, (*relieved*)—There, he's seating her, and she seems quite recovered. Poor girl! I shouldn't think her mother would let her waltz, if it makes her so giddy.

MR. C. (*aside*)—Is it the perfection of satire? Surely, surely, *she* is not acting?

MIRANDA, (*who has been gazing around*)—There, now; I always told sissy fashionable novels were a libel on fashionable life. (*Mr. C. looks surprised.*) You know they say people in high life never have any real feelings, or if they do, it's dreadfully ill-bred to show them,—especially if it's *love*.

MR. C.—Yes,—well?

MIRANDA, (*confidentially*)—Hush! Don't look around; it might embarrass them. But just behind me are a pair of lovers, making love to each other just as *hard*! Oh, you needn't smile. I saw them look at each other, and he whispered something in her ear, just as they do in story-books, you know.

MR. C.—What do you mean the lady in pink? Why, it's Mrs. Danvers and Lieut. Cornell. Oh, that's too good! They do seem to be going it rather steep, that's a fact. And here comes her lord and master, green with jealousy, as usual.

MIRANDA, (*surprised*)—Mrs. Danvers,—Lieut. Cornell? You are mistaken, sir. She's not a married lady. They are *lovers*. I saw him kiss her hand.

MR. C. (*aside*)—Good Lord! It's an angel of innocence, dropped down from heaven! (*Aloud, hurriedly*) Of course, of course, child. I've made a mistake. They are a pair of turtle-doves, to be sure; innocent, cooing, young things. But let's get out of their way,—not to spoil sport, you know. (*Aside.*) To think that there should be anything so fresh and pure in all this grimy world, and Arthur Cressingham has it on his arm! (*They cross stage, passing Miss Hitchcock and Mr. Buckland in centre. Miss H. and Mr. C. exchange a frigid bow.*)

MR. BUCKLAND.—Lucky dog,—Cressingham; always falls in with the pretty girls; wish I had half his luck. This one's a regular stunner, and brand new, too. Looks like clover, and buttercups, and all that sort of thing. See how the men stare!

MISS HITCHCOCK—Sheep generally *do* stare at clover, I believe, Mr. Buckland. Green things suit their digestion.

MR. B.—Ha, ha! Capital! *Sheep!* I see,—because they follow a leader. And the leader (*indicating Mr. C.*) instead of wearing a bell on his neck, carries one on his arm. Ha, ha! (*Aside.*) See her wince! That shot hit home, Bucky, my boy.

MIRANDA—(*shading eyes with hand*)—Oh, who is that poor lady who is scowling so dreadfully! How cross and unhappy she looks.

MR. C.—Whom do you mean,—where?

MIRANDA—That lady in green, who frowns at me so.

MR. C. (*turning away*)—Oh, yes; I see. She is a Miss Hitchcock.

MIRANDA—*Miss Hitchcock!* You don't really mean it?

MR. C.—Why not?

MIRANDA—Oh, how extraordinary! And that is really Miss Hitchcock. Yes, to be sure,—and just as they describe her. And now where is Mr. Cressingham, poor man? I'm sorry for him. He ought to be with her,—but he can't be the man she's dancing with.

MR. C.—Why not? Do you know Mr. Cressingham?

MIRANDA—No; but I've heard him described. Point him out to me, please.

MR. C. (*looking around*)—Do you know—it's very odd—but I don't see him anywhere.

MIRANDA (*gravely*)—He ought to be with her. They are engaged to be married.

MR. C.—And must people who are engaged always go in couples, poor things!

MIRANDA—*Poor things!* What, if they care for each other?

MR. C.—In some cases; yes, of course.

MIRANDA—Well, I suppose that is true, in some cases; and this is not one of them, for I have heard she is very cross, and *snubs* him.

MR. C. (*frowning*)—*Snubs* him! Oh, they say that, do they?

MIRANDA.—Yes; and worse still. Do you know, he can't be really nice, though he is so handsome and clever, for they say he is marrying her for her money.

MR. C. (*sarcastically*)—How shocking!

MIRANDA—Yes, isn't it? Only fancy what their lives will be when they are married.

MR. C.—No; *don't* fancy it. Perhaps they never will be.

MIRANDA—Oh, yes they will. Why, the wedding day is fixed, and the dress made. (*Laughs to herself.*)

MR. C.—But marriages are sometimes broken off at the very altar.

MIRANDA, (*opening eyes*)—Oh, how wicked!

MR. C.—More wicked to break a promise than swear a lie?

MIRANDA—Break a promise,—swear a lie? But *both* are impossible; nobody could do either.

MR. C.—Oh, couldn't they? People never make mistakes, I suppose.

MIRANDA, (*thoughtfully*)—Yes; I suppose they do. Well, then, if such a dreadful thing *did* happen, he ought to ask her to release him.

MR. C. (*eagerly*)—But suppose she would not?

MIRANDA, (*confidently*)—Oh, but she would. Do you think a *lady* would ever want to keep the *letter* of a promise when its spirit is broken? She would be a *horrid* woman.

MR. C.—But there are horrid women. Let us suppose for the argument's sake that she *is* one, and that she refuses. What should the unfortunate man do then?

MIRANDA—Why, of course he must marry her.

MR. C.—Do you really think so? To swear false vows, swear to love and honor, when he does neither?

MIRANDA, (*distressed and eager*)—No, no; he would have told her, and he



would try to do his very best. There would be no falseness in it. And he would be helped,—he would *pray*—(*steps suddenly.*) Oh, don't talk of such things here ; it is irreverent.

MR. C. (*aside*)—Heavenly innocence ! (*Music strikes up. All begin to waltz.*)

MIRANDA, (*wistfully*)—Please, *might* I dance ? It looks so beautiful, and sissy taught me how.

MR. C.—Certainly, of course ; pardon me for not suggesting it before. (*They waltz off to rear. Miss Hitchcock and Mr. Buckland promenade to centre of stage.*)

MR. B. (*looking 'round*)—Hullo ! What's come over our Knight of the Rueful Countenance ? Waltzing, by Jove, and smiling at the same time. Miss Hitchcock, this thing must be stopped. The combined exertion will kill him. Just let me seat you somewhere, and I'll rescue the misguided youth from that female whirling dervish and bid him hearken to the call of love and duty.

MISS H. (*haughtily*)—I beg, Mr. Buckland, you will do nothing of the kind. Leave me, by all means, but send no one else, I prefer to be alone. (*Seats herself. Mr. B. bows and walks off.*)

MISS H.—And so he, too, the poor ensign, deserts me, lured by that bit of pink and white rusticity ! (*Watches Mr. C. and Mir.*) How he smiles at her. I never saw him smile like that before. How handsome he is. Arthur, Arthur, how handsome you are ! (*Hurriedly rising.*) They are coming this way. Let me get out of their sight. If he were to look at me again as he looked at me just now, as if I were a venomous toad in his path, I think I should strike her where she stands ! (*Passes hastily to right wing, and watches them unseen. Mr. C. and Mir. re-enter and promenade to center of stage. Music re commences. People change partners.*)

MIR.—They are going to dance again, and it's so delicious. Please, I don't understand,—what happens ? Do we change partners, or how do we manage ?

MR. C. (*aside*)—Where is her chaperone ? Surely she came in with Mrs. Nesbitt. How can she be left so completely to herself ? (*Aloud.*) No, we don't change partners ; we go on dancing together as long as we like.

MIR.—Then *shall* we begin again ? It is such a waste of time, when we might be dancing. It's almost wrong, don't you think so ?

MR. C.—Decidedly ! (*Just as they begin to dance Mr. Buckland comes up.*)

MR. B. (*aside to Mr. C.*)—Down with monopolies, old fellow ! Introduce me. (*Mr. C. goes through pantomime of introduction.*)

MR. B.—May I have the pleasure of the next dance ?

MIR.—Thank you, but I can't ; I'm dancing with Mr. — (*looks inquiringly at Mr. C., who looks at his boots.*)

MR. B.—Yes ; but that waltz is over. May I not hope for the next ?

MIR. (*smiling*)—But I am going on dancing with him.

MR. B. (*gravely*)—Oh, indeed ! (*A pause. Mr. B. bows and walks off. Joins Miss Hitchcock and exit, staring.*)

MIR.—How strangely that gentleman looked. What did he mean ?

MR. C.—Oh, nothing. (*They waltz off again. Enter Lady Maria and Mr. Hitchcock.*)

LADY M. (*to Lady Leslie*)—Well, Heaven be praised ! *That's* over and no bones broken. We only upset two couples and a vase and a few chairs. (*Sinks into a seat and fans herself vigorously.*)

MR. H.—A most delightful dance, Lady Leslie. Your daughter waltzes like a sylph. I shall be pleased to have another during the evening.

LADY M.—The pleasure will be all on *one* side then. There, mumsey, don't faint with horror. Mr. Hitchcock knows I always speak my mind : and (*with a saucy bow*) I won't take any more galop in mine, thank you, sir ! (*Turns to Mr. B. and engages in an animated pantomimic conversation.*)

MR. H.—Charming girl, your daughter, Lady Leslie ; so full of spirits ; a little inclined to kick in the traces, now and then ; don't take kindly to har-

ness. But I like a spirited filly, for my part ; there's credit in breaking them in. May I conduct you to supper ? (*Leads Lady Leslie off, r. d. People begin to file out through same door in couples. Mr. C. and Mir. come down center of stage.*)

MIR.—Do you know Miss Hitchcock ?

MR. C. (*embarrassed*)—Yes,—rather.

MIRANDA—She keeps looking at me like an evil eye, and it makes me nervous. I wish she wouldn't. Or is it my dress she is looking at ?

MR. C.—Why *you*, of course ; why should she look at your dress ? It's charmingly pretty, white and shining, and all that, but nothing out of the way, is it ? But why does Miss Hitchcock interest you so much ? Verily, it does her too much honor.

MIRANDA—There's a special reason you know nothing about, and I can't possibly tell you. Besides, I'm very sorry for her. As for that, Mr. Cressingham, I'd despise him with all my heart if I did not know he was going to pay the penalty of his meanness.

MR. C.—*Meanness ?*

MIRANDA—Yes ; why do you seem so surprised ?

MR. C.—Oh, merely because I had never happend to hear him accused of meanness before ; that's all. Shall we go in to supper ?

MIRANDA—Supper, so soon ? Oh, no ; I think it is too warm for supper. But if you will bring me a glass of water here I shall be obliged.

MR. C.—Certainly. (*Clock strikes twelve.*) But hark ! the clock is striking midnight. I am afraid to leave you lest you should disappear like the Cinderella of the fairy tale.

MIRANDA—Oh, I have no fairy godmother, I assure you ; and I'm so thirsty.

MR. C.—If that is the case, I fly. (*Exit l. d.*)

MIRANDA, (*looking after him*)—Ah, why was he in such a hurry ? I wanted to thank him for making me so happy ; and now I shall never see him again ! Oh ! I must call him back for just a minute. (*Starts towards the door.*) But no ! this is my only chance for escape. (*Runs to window*) The balcony is divided by a low railing from the balcony outside the first floor's window. His window is open ; how fortunate ! I can spring over the railing, and through his window, and up to my room, and nobody the wiser. (*Sighs.*) Oh, how easy it is to escape from fairyland. Good-bye, my Prince ; my kind, stately, beautiful Prince ! I shall never, never see you again ! (*Mounts into the balcony. The curtains fall around her. At this instant Mr. Cressingham reappears with water in hand. Stands staring blankly around him as the curtain falls.*)

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## ACT SECOND—SCENE FIRST.

(*Mrs. Green's lodging-house. Miranda's room, as before ; wedding dress spread out on sofa. Enter Miranda, hastily, r. d. ; crosses stage to back door, and calls off :*)

MIRANDA—Please, Mrs. Green, take Sissy's breakfast to her room ; she finished this morning, and I've coaxed her to remain in bed to-day.

MRS. GREEN, (*off*)—Yes, my dear, I'll bring it directly, my lamb. (*Re-enter Miranda ; stands looking at wedding dress in a dazed sort of a way.*)

MIRANDA—The wedding dress—the ball—the Prince ! Was I really ever so happy ? When I woke up this morning and found poor Sissy so ill I had forgotten all about it ; and now it all comes back to me. How *beautiful* it was ! (*Examining dress.*) But how my heart beat when I stepped inside the first floor's window and saw him standing there ; yes, actually standing there with



a lighted candle in his hand. But luckily his back was turned to me. My gracious ! how he jumped when I blew out the candle, and what a race we had up the steps ! I'd have given anything to have seen his face when I popped into the closet and hid among the brooms and dust pans. What fun it was to hear him scampering up and down, and peering into corners and opening doors, and every two minutes saying "By Jove !" I thought I should have died of suppressed laughter. But here I am undiscovered, and not even a spot on Miss Hitchcock's wedding dress to spoil the memory of that beautiful, beautiful time. Oh, dear ! how kind he was. (*Enter Mrs. Green, tray in hand, c. d.*)

MRS. GREEN—My dear, I fetched a cup of tea up to Miss Sophy, and she's swallowed it, and a morsel of toast to keep it company ; and now she's gone off to sleep, and she'll be well again in a jiffy. She's only tired out, that's all.

MIRANDA, (*cheerfully*)—Well, I must work double then, and try to rest her. I like working double ; it makes one feel strong and big.

MRS. GREEN, (*setting table*)—Bless your innocent heart ! I believe you. Now here's a bit of kidney and potatoe that's browned to a perfect picture. Sit down and eat it like a lamb, do. (*Miranda sits at table, and Mrs. Green waits on her.*)

MRS. GREEN, (*confidentially*)—My dear, that's a queer gent we've got on our first floor. (*Miranda starts.*) He's been and saw a ghost immediate, and nobody ever seed a ghost on these premises afore.

Miranda—What was the ghost like ?

MRS. GREEN—Like a pretty woman, he says ; dressed in white, *of course*—ghosts always is ; it would seem unnatural like if they wasn't.

Miranda—What did it do ?

MRS. GREEN—Why, it appeared just as the clocks were striking midnight, *of course*, and it blew out the candle, which seems to me an uncommon frisky thing for a spook to do, and whisked through the door and up the stairs, and disappeared—swallowed into the ground right afore the first-floor's eyes, which was a follerin' behind, two steps at a time.

Miranda—Swallowed into the ground ? Did the first-floor say that ?

MRS. GREEN—Well, if not *swallowed*, leastways disappeared.

Miranda—Did he really believe it was a ghost ?

MRS. GREEN—Not at first, Miss. He asked me about every woman there was in the house, and I told him there was me and the cook and Nancy ; and he sniggered, the first-floor did, and he said it was none of *we* ; so I says there was Mrs. Jones and the two Miss Joneses, and he questions me about them sharp ; and I tells him Mrs. Jones was a fine woman of forty-five, and the Miss Joneses are her husband's sisters, and no younger than she, and just like other ladies who don't get married when they are young. So he sniggered again, the first-floor did, (*he's a oner for sniggerin' !*) and he says it wasn't them at all. And I says, of course it wasn't, nor nobody else. Then I tells him about you and Miss Sophy, and that you'd been asleep for hours and hours ; and then he says, very well, it must have been a ghost, for it was nobody at all, and he'd seen it, heident. Which I told him he'd been asleep on his sofa, and most likely had had a drop too much, and he oughtn't to go for to take away the character of a widder's lodgings with his ghosts and sich and the next one he saw I'd give him notice to quit on the spot. So I walked right away for fear my dander'd riz, and I'd do it then, and it would be ten shillings out of my pocket come Saturday. Ghosts indeed !

Miranda—Oh, dear Mrs. Green, I wouldn't send him off on that account, I wouldn't indeed. Probably nothing more will happen, and it would be so hard on him, you know.

MRS. GREEN—What business has he to go for to see ghosts, Miss ? (*Knock heard at c. d.*) Here's somebody at the door. I'll just whisk myself and my dishes out of your way, my dear. (*Exit with tray, r. d.*)

(*Miranda opens c. d. Mr. Gaunt enters.*)

Mr. Gaunt—You are the young lady belonging to this room, I presume?

Miranda, (breathlessly)—Yes, sir; wont you walk in?

Mr. Gaunt—Then you are the very person I want to see.

Miranda—Are you the first-floor, sir?

Mr. Gaunt—Yes; I've seen you before, Miss.

Miranda—Oh, I couldn't help it. I—I—beg your pardon; but I really couldn't help it, sir.

Mr. Gaunt, (surprised)—Of course not. I saw you in church last Sunday week, and I followed you and you came in here; so I immediately took lodgings here too.

Miranda, (with dignity)—You were extremely foolish then, and you have no right to tell me so, or to speak to me at all. I must beg you to excuse me, sir. (About to leave room.)

Mr. Gaunt—Stop a minute. I am an artist. I am painting a picture. I wanted a face—a particular sort of a face. I had been looking for it for weeks, and at last I found it in church. It's *you*.

Miranda—Oh, I beg your pardon, sir; is that all? I thought you meant a compliment, and that would have been so impertinent, you know.

Mr. Gaunt—Bother compliments! Do I look the sort of party who is likely to chase round after pretty faces to pay them compliments? I'm an artist, and I live for my work. I'm thinking about my picture, not you.

Miranda—Oh, yes, I don't mind that at all.

Mr. Gaunt—And will you sit to me?

Miranda—I can't, really, sir; my sister's sick, and I haven't time; besides, I don't know you.

Mr. Gaunt—Hullo! that's it, is it? If it's the want of an introduction we'll soon fix that. (Calls off.) Mrs. Green! Mrs. Green!

Mrs. Green, (in the distance)—Coming, sir, coming.

Mr. Gaunt, (keeps door open looking out)—“She comes, she comes, I have called her long;” she comes up the staircase, two hundred pounds strong. (Enter Mrs. Green, c. d.) Mrs. Green, will you do me the kindness to introduce me to this young lady?

Mrs. Gaunt—Well, really, sir, I don't know; why should I? You're pretty old and wear spectacles; but then—

Mr. Gaunt, (interrupting)—I'm painting a picture that'll make me immortal, and I want her face to put in it. Introduce me like a good soul.

Mrs. Green—Oh, you're one of those painting chaps, are you? That accounts for your seeing spooks. Them sort of people always have queer goings on in their upper stories. And you want to paint Miss Mirandy, do you? My dear, I don't see why not; 'taint as if he was a gentleman; and you'd make a lovely picture. Miss Miranda Maxwell, this is Mr. Gaunt, the first-floor, and I'd the best of references with him.

Mr. Gaunt—Well, I'm blessed! Miranda too! Why, it's as Miranda I want to paint you. It's a coincidence to knock a man into a cocked hat!

Miranda—Miranda—Shakespeare's Miranda? Oh, I'm not half pretty enough for her.

Mr. Gaunt—I'll be hanged if you're not pretty enough for anything! Beg pardon; I'm respectful—perfectly respectful; only, you see, I'm trembling with impatience to begin. There, (poses her,) stand just so; a little more wonder in your eyes, please; a trifle more smile, as if you saw a new dress, or a bean, or whatever else girls like; so. Now I'll just take a little sketch. (Opens portfolio hurriedly.)

Miranda—But indeed I can't stay now, sir; I'm engaged at M<sup>me</sup> la Gai's. You know we are dressmakers, and I'm late already. Will to-morrow do?

Mr. Gaunt—A whole twenty-four hours! Well, I suppose “needs must when the devil drives.” Beg pardon; slip of the tongue; I'm perfectly respectful. To-morrow be it. You'll come, Mrs. Green, to play propriety—that's a good soul; and perhaps I'll put you in as Sycorax—who knows? In

the meantime I'll keep my eyes open for an Ariel. Good morning. (Shakes hands with Miranda. Suddenly) *That's* the look I want—smiling, bright-eyed, you know! Here, take a look at yourself in the glass, and try to save it up till to-morrow. (Mr. Gaunt holds up hand-glass. Miranda draws back embarrassed, but laughing. *Tableau. Curtain falls.*)

ACT SECOND—SCENE TWO.

(*Mme. la Gai's show-room. Mirror at one side, shawls, sacques, bonnets, etc., hanging about on pegs and dummies; a pile of bonnet boxes near mirror. Miss Hitchcock, Lady Leslie and Mme. la Gai examining shawl in rear with backs turned to audience. Lady Maria and Mr. Hitchcock in front.*)

Lady Maria, (trying on long, black silk polonaise, petulantly)—I think *somebody* might help me button the thing up!

Mr. Hitchcock—Shall I call the person in attendance?

Lady M.—Don't you see she's busy?

Mr. Hitchcock, (embarrassed)—Well—

Lady M. (coaxingly)—Have not you some fingers and thumbs? You said you'd do anything in the world for me, and here you leave me to button up this long thing all myself!

Mr. Hitchcock, (glancing uneasily at his daughter) Certainly, by all means. Your slave lives but to serve you! (Kneels and commences to button; aside.) By jove, if Hannah should look 'round now!

Lady M. (drawling)—Thanks, they are all crooked, but never mind! Men never *are* fit for anything useful!

Mr. Hitchcock, [still on knees and seizing her hand]—Only to adore the pretty girls!

Lady M. [mischievously, not releasing her hand]—Hannah, how do you like this polonaise? [Mr. Hitchcock jumps to his feet]

Lady M. [innocently]—Ah, she didn't hear! Let's look at some bonnets, now. [Opens boxes]—Here's a beauty! Hold that, please! [Gives him bonnets till his hands are full.] This is a love! [Tries on one before glass.]

Mr. Hitchcock—Lovely, charming. You remind me of—a—um—of Venus rising from the sea.

Lady M.—Ah, excuse me—not in this cold climate! [Mr. Hitchcock edges round, to get a better view.] Heavens, man, don't stir! You'll drop one and Mme Gai will be in despair. [Takes another out of box.] Ah, here *is* a gem! [Snatches bonnet off head, and Mr. H's hands being full, claps it on his.] Now *this* is becoming. Mamma! Hannah! [Mr. H. makes imploring signals to have the hat removed, which Lady M. ignores.] Hannah, just look here for a moment. [They turn round. *Tableau.*]

Miss Hitchcock, [severely]—Father!

Mme. La Gai.—Ah, ciel! [Lady Leslie holds up her hands in silent amazement.]

Mr. Hitchcock—Somebody take the confounded things, or I'll pitch them out of the window.

Mme. La Gai, [rushing down centre]—Ah, mon Dieu! I will relieve you, Monsieur. [Takes bonnets.]

Lady M. [demurely]—Your father is such an amiable old gentleman, Hannah; he loves to make himself useful.

Miss H. [dryly]—So I observe. [To father, severely.] Father, you have an engagement at the club, this morning, I believe?

Mr. H. [hurriedly]—Yes, my dear, of course; glad you reminded me. Good morning, ladies.

Lady M.—Must you really go, Mr. Hitchcock? There are lots more things to try on.

Mr. H. [at r. d.]—Must, upon my word; most important engagement; good morning. [Exit Mr. H., r. d.]

Miss H. [coldly]—Perhaps now, Maria, you will find yourself at leisure to help me in my selections. [Lady M. follows her across the stage. Mme. La Gai displays lace sacque. Enter Miranda, u. r. e. Seats herself behind counter and removes bonnet and shawl.]

Mme. La Gai—Mais oui, mesdames, c'est tres comme il faut! Vat ze call *becoming*,—vere, vere becoming,—et so *sheep*! Mademoiselle, permettez moi. [Offers to put it on Miss H's shoulders.]

Miss H. [drawing back]—Put in on that young person's shoulders, madame, [indicating Miranda.] She has a tolerable figure, and we might judge better of the effect.

Mme. La Gai, [embarrassed]—Zat young lady, mademoiselle? She, she is not belonging to my establishment. Peut etre, M'lle, I zall 'ave ze honore [Puts it on her own shoulders.]

Miss H. [laughing disagreeably]—It's not exactly your style, my good friend. Perhaps the young person will consent to oblige us, if you ask her.

Mme. La Gai, [aside to Miranda]—C'est M'lle Hitchcock, une grande dame, so riche, s' vat you call fastedious. Vill you be so vere good, M'lle Mirande? [Miranda smilingly assents, comes out from behind the counter, puts on sacque, and walks up and down.]

Miss H., [critically]—Yes, it's not so bad; it might do; there's something rather novel and stylish about it, isn't there Maria? [Putting up eye-glass.] Have I seen that young person here before, Madame?

Mme. La Gai—Non, M'lle, never; I tink never.

Miss H.—Her face seems strangely familiar to me. A likeness I suppose. [Aside.] How embarrassed she is. There must be something behind all that blushing and nervousness.

Lady M.—Oh, mumsey! she is the very image of that pretty girl at Lady Gregory's ball, that Mr. —

Lady L., [warningly]—My dear!

Miss H., [letting eye-glass fall]—Yes, that must be the likeness I saw. But why did you stop Maria, Lady Leslie? Do you think I mind?

Lady M., [aside to Lady Leslie]—Certainly it is the strangest likeness I ever saw. [Aloud.] You don't mind being considered like a great beauty who made a sensation at Lady Gregory's ball, do you?

Miranda, [smiling]—But I'm not a beauty, am I?

Lady M., [heartily]—Upon my word I think you are. I know *some* people [glancing at Miss Hitchcock] who would give half their fortune for such a pink and white skin.

Miss H. [irritably]—Don't be foolish, Maria. Don't be putting ideas into the young person's head.

Lady M.—But what's the use of heads unless we have ideas in them? And what's the use of ideas unless they make us jolly? And there's nothing going so awfully jolly as knowing we are pretty and the men are mad after us!

Miss Hitchcock, [still watching Miranda, who seems uneasy]—What was that girl's name, at Lady Gregory's ball? I heard several people asking, but nobody knew.

Lady M., [flippantly]—Then why didn't you ask "nobody" if nobody knew? I asked nobody, and so I can tell you. She was a Miss Style, a great Yorkshire heiress, who came with Mrs. Nesbitt. Isn't it hard lines on *nous autres* that such a beauty should be rich, too. I'll bet a pony she sings. [Abruptly to Miranda] Do you sing?

Miranda—Oh, yes; I sing.

Lady M.—Oh, mumsey, oh, Hannah; we've nothing to do 'till the carriage



comes ; do let's make her sing. You'll sing for us, wont you, and be amiable ? you counterpart of Miss Style, you !

Miranda—Only I am not an heiress.

Lady M.—That's a pity. But it's easily remedied. You must catch an old fellow with lots of — [pretends to slap pockets.]

Lady L. [reprovingly]—My dear !

Lady M.—But mayn't she sing, mumsey ? You know we want a soprano for our Charade. Wouldn't she just do, face and figure and all ? You sing soprano ?

Miranda—Oh, yes.

Lady M.—Then please, please sing. Pretend its a concert, and they are the audience, and I'm the manager. See, I'll lead you on. [Leads her down centre of stage a la concert.]

Miranda—Am I really to sing ? What a funny idea. [Ladies group themselves on right hand ; Miss Hitchcock in rear ; Mme. La Gai stands on the left. Miranda sings.] \*

Lady M.—Oh, that was beautiful, heavenly ! Mumsey, we *must* have her for our charade. [Leads Lady L. aside, and talks for a minute in earnest pantomime.]

Miranda, [aside, looking at Miss H.]—Tears on her cheeks ! Tears at *my* song ! Poor thing ! How unhappy she looks. How I wish I could comfort her !

Lady M. [aloud]—You will come to us, won't you ? Mamma says she will be very happy to have you. [Lady L. bows affirmatively.] Our soprano has gone away, and we shan't know what to do without you. Promise to come !

Miranda—It would be great fun. I don't think Sophy would object. Yes, I'll promise.

Lady M.—That's tip top ! Here's my number ; we are all living together. Come to-morrow, please, and stay to lunch, and we can arrange everything. [Gives card.]

Miss H. [impatiently]—Are we to stay here all day ?

Lady M.—I thought we were waiting for —

Miss H. [haughtily]—*I* am not waiting for anyone, and I never shall think of waiting for *him*. I made an appointment, and kept it, as I always do. But if other people are late, so much the worse for them. I have finished my business ; shall we go ?

M'me La Gai, [hastily]—But M'lle, zall I not 'ave ze plaisir to show you la jolie robe in ze next room ?

Miss H.—Ah, yes ; I had forgotten. Will you come with me, ladies ? [They pass out, led by M'me La Gai, bowing pleasantly to Miranda. Miss H. lingers a moment.]

Miss H.—Will you let me know when you visit Lady Maria to-morrow ? I should like to have you come to my room.

Miranda—To your room ? Thank you ; that would be very nice. [Then, seeing Miss H. stare,] Oh, I beg your pardon. How stupid of me ! Of course I'll come, if you wish it.

Miss H.—Did you ever see the Miss Style they say you are like, and that you certainly *are* like ?

Miranda, [confused]—I, I don't know who you mean.

Miss H. [severely]—Masquerading is a very foolish thing.

Miranda, [aside]—Oh, gracious ! she knows. [Aloud, faintly,] What ?

Miss H.—Never mind. Perhaps you understand me ; and if you don't, there's no harm done. Good morning, [Exit l. d.]

Miranda, [alone, wringing her hands]—She must know ! There is nothing else she can mean. Yet who would have thought she could recognize a dress

\* Miranda's songs are from "Miss Hitchcock's Wedding Dress," and have been set to music by Mr. Walton S. Perkins, Milwaukee, Wis.

she never saw since it left the shelves? I shall never have courage to go to her, never. But if I refuse, she will be certain. Oh, why did I ever indu'ge in that dreadful, delicious, harum-scarum escapade? I shall be wretched all the rest of my life. And yet,—if I could only see *him* again, I think I should not care if the whole world found me out! [Steps heard outside.] Here's somebody coming. Perhaps it's Miss Hitchcock again. I'll hide in the trying-on room. [Exit hurriedly r. u. e., as Mr. Cressingham enters r. d.]

Mr. C. [moodyly]—No one here; so much the better. [Tosses over shawls, etc., with cane.] These are some of the gands, I suppose, in which my *lovely bride* is to lead me to execution. Pah! How I hate that sour, cynical face and biting tongue. No wonder the little darling said she had an evil eye. She has, she has; and it's blighting the very heart in my bosom. By Jove! I'll not submit to it. I'll demand a release I'll— [sinking into a chair.] But no. Even *she* tells me what my duty is. Things have gone too far. I am not the *first* fool, I suppose, who has bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage,—nor the *last*, either. [Starting up and walking to and fro.] But oh, beautiful vision of sweetness and innocence! do not cross my path again. Your very memory unmans me; in your presence I should be a grovelling slave. [Door of trying-on room opens, and Miranda appears. Mr. C. stares at her blankly.] Ah——! [Springing forward and seizing both hands.] Is it *you*? Can it be possible? *You*, of all the peop'e in the world! [Solemnly.] Bear me witness; I did not seek you; I had no thought of finding you here; I came to do my duty. It is Fate that has brought us together again,—remember, it is Fate! After this, let what will—happen.

Miranda, [wondering]—Surely, it is Fate,—or, rather, let us call it Providence. But are you not glad to see me? Shall I go away?

Mr. C.—Not for worlds! Glad? My child, I don't think I ever knew what it was to be glad before.

Miranda, [softly]—That is what I said myself, last night. That was a beautiful ball; was it not?

Mr. C.—The *most* beautiful ball I ever attended.

Miranda—I said *that* too. [Laughs to herself.] What did you think when you came back and found me gone?

Mr. C.—What did I think? Why, that you were a cruel little Cinderella, to run away without even leaving me the slipper.

Miranda—But you forget; I had boots on.

Mr. C.—Boots? Ah, yes; boots. And is it not always so? Isn't it just the difference between boots and slippers that makes or mars a man's life?

Miranda—But how?

Mr. C.—Why, thus. I'll take an example. I could not find you because you did not leave me a slipper; you did not leave me a slipper because, by a mere chance, you wore boots; and by these chances and trifles lives are lost.

Miranda.—And yet, after all, Providence has brought us together again! [pause; gaily] I don't believe in chances! When you spoke of boots or slippers making or marring a life, I thought it was because boots meant *work*, and slippers, idleness.

Mr. C. [eagerly]—Thank you; you have given me the key-note. There is hope in *that*. Yes, I will work; I will use every means to bring about my end.

Miranda, [archly]—But you must wear thicker boots than those, if the work is to be at all difficult.

Mr. C.—I'll wear seven league boots, if necessary.

Miranda—Ah, there it is! You can't do your work yourself, so you give in at once and call upon the giants to help you.

Mr. C.—But that is because I want to pursue a fairy. [Horn blows outside for dinner.]

Miranda—Oh, dear, there are the horns blowing for dinner, and I have so



far to go ! Oh, why do the beautiful times slip away so fast, and only the dull, stupid ones linger ?

Mr. C.—Must you go ? But at least let me see you to your carriage ?

Miranda—No, thank you ; I shall walk ; and besides I must see Mme. la Gai before I leave. [Goes towards l. d.]

Mr. C., [following her]—And when shall I see you again ? If I dine at Mrs. Nesbitt's n Thursday, is there any chance of my meeting the sister Sophy you told me so much about last evening—and—and—Cinderella ?

Miranda—I don't think there is the slightest.

Mr. C.—But when *shall* we meet ? We are friends are we not ?

Miranda—Oh, surely—[embarrassed] at least I am friends with *you*.

Mr. C.—Well, friends love to meet each other ; so tell me when I may see you again.

Miranda—Well, I don't know ; perhaps at Lady Leslie's charade party. There, I can't wait another minute. Good-bye. [Exit hurriedly.]

[Mr. C. stands looking after her.] So gentle, so spirited ; how she allures, yet how her utter innocence repels one. Her eyes seem to read my soul with their wise, shy glances ; but how childlike they are. This time yesterday I did not know her, and already I feel hope and courage revive within me. There *is* something worth living for after all. It is not a myth, this thing the poets call love. I feel it ; I know it. [Picks up hat and cane.] And *now* to remove forever the one obstacle to perfect happiness. [Starts towards r. d. just as Miss Hitchcock enters it.]

Mr. C., [bowing profoundly]—A happy chance, madame ; I was on the point of starting to your house.

Miss Hitchcock, [coldly]—To apologize for being tardy, as usual, I presume. Quite unnecessary, I assure you. Your movements are equally indifferent to me.

Mr. C.—That being the case then, I shall have less difficulty in explaining myself.

Miss H., [glancing around sees Miranda's shawl on chair and picks it up]—You have seen that girl again, Arthur. It is Miss Style, after all ; I guessed as much. [Sneeringly.] Is it a rendezvous *en masque*, and have I scared away your charmer ? I have merely returned for my parasol ; here it is. [Picks up parasol,]

Mr. C.—The sneer is characteristic, madame. No ; it is not a rendezvous, an I am the only person *en masque*. I throw it off now, once and for all. Madame, I desire to be released from my engagement.

Miss H., [putting up eye-glass, and speaking in a most exasperating tone]—Ah, indeed ! We have fallen in love over night with a pink and white doll from the country, and straightway we throw honor and obligation to the winds !

Mr. C., [fiercely]—Madame—

Miss H., [changing her manner]—Listen to me, Arthur. There is no pretence of love between us. You are fulfilling the debt of honor your father contracted to mine, twenty years ago, and bequeathed to you on his death bed. And I—I, [turning away and speaking aside] am playing traitor to every tradition of her sex, which forbids a woman giving her heart unasked—it's a bargain—a contract—but [with intense emphasis] *you shall not break it!* My father has your father's written promise ; I have yours. You shall not disgrace me before these people whom I have disliked and despised all my life.

Mr. C.—Madame, this is extraordinary language !

Miss H.—[passionately]—Arthur ! you never loved me I know ; but it is only last night you learned to hate me. Good God ! am I so hideous, then, that the allurements of a girl who can never be yours have made you recreant to your plighted word ?

Mr. C., [alarmed]—I—I—do not understand—

Miss H., [triumphantly]—I thought as much. You didn't know your charmer was bespoken, then? Listen—[Reads from newspaper.] "The engagement of Miss Style, the beautiful Yorkshire heiress, daughter of John Style, of Bretten Hall, East Riding, to the Honorable George Dulancy, is announced. The marriage will take place early in October." [Mr. C. takes the paper, stares vacantly at it; then by a great effort recovers himself. Miss H. watches him closely.]

Miss Hitchcock, [gently]—I am going now, Arthur. Will you give me your arm to the carriage? [He offers it mechanically. She pauses a moment.] Do you still wish me to release you, Arthur?

Mr. C., [doggedly]—You father has my father's written promise; you have mine; I am ready to fulfill the contract, madame. [She takes his arm and they pass out as the curtain falls.]

### ACT THIRD—SCENE FIRST.

(*Miss Hitchcock's drawing-room, handsomely furnished. Mr. Cressingham discovered leaning against the mantle, and switching his boot with his riding whip, in a moody, listless manner. Enter page, r. u. e.*)

Page—Please, sir, here's a young leddy asking for the leddies, and they are out. She said she'd like to wait. Shall I show her up?

Mr. C.—I suppose so; somebody calling by appointment, doubtless. I'll go into the library. [Exit page.]

[Mr. C. gathers whip, hat, gloves, etc. Re-enter page, followed by Miranda.]

Page—The leddies will be back directly, ma'am. Take a chair.

Miranda—Thanks. Tell Lady Maria Leslie its about the charade party. She will understand. I was to have called last week, but could not leave my sick sister; so of course she has given up expecting me. Tell her that, please.

Page—Yes'm. [Exit. Mr. C., who has started and turned round at hearing her voice, comes hastily down centre.]

Mr. C.—You here, in *this* house? Can it be possible? I thought I had lost you.

Miranda, [shyly]—But why? Did you not think we should ever meet again?

Mr. C.—I might have known we should; still I hardly thought fate would meek me so cruelly a *second* time.

Miranda—Mock you? [Much surprised.]

Mr. C.—Why were you not more frank with me, Miss Style? Why—[Miranda begins to laugh; he stops, offended.] Oh, I see you are laughing at my expense. You might have known I should find out the truth. A dozen people at least have told me.

Miranda—Gracious! How did they know? Did Miss Hitchcock know, after all, and tell them?

Mr. C.—Tell them? Why it was in the Morning Post!

Miranda, [faintly, sinking into a chair]—The Morning Post? Then I am disgraced for life. [Covers face with hands.] Oh, how cruel of her!

Mr. C., [puzzled]—There is some misunderstanding here. I refer to your engagement, which was published in the Morning Post a week ago.

Miranda, [springing up]—My engagement? Good heavens! what an extraordinary thing. It must mean Sophy; she's been engaged to George for ever so long; but I never was engaged in my whole life—never, never!

Mr. C., [catching her hand]—Do you mean to say that you are free—absolutely free?

Miranda—I never even had a boy beau! Don't you believe me? You must believe me!

Mr. C., [earnestly looking into her eyes]—Believe you, my child? Can there be anything but truth in those wells of light? Of course I believe you—gladly, eagerly; only matters are somewhat complicated now; I have been made the victim of a mistake or a fraud—[aside] a *fraud* I verily believe—curse her jealousy! I have something to say to you—to ask you. Can you guess what it is? My—[stops suddenly.] I must see Miss Hitchcock first, and then—

Miranda, [surprised]—See Miss Hitchcock—[Sudden loud noises are heard outside, followed by screams and cries. Page rushes in r. d.]

Page—Oh, please, sir; a dreadful accident, sir! The carriage 'ave run away, and my mistress is smashed all to little bits!

Maid, [rushes in r. d.]—My mistress, sir! Miss Hitchcock, sir! Murder! fire! thieves! [R. D. opens and two men enter, carrying Miss H., insensible, bonnet falling off, dress torn, etc.]

Miranda, [runs forward]—Oh, poor lady! poor lady! Lay her down here, please. [Makes room on sofa; attends to her.]

Mr. C., [authoritatively to page]—Here, you, boy, don't stand staring there. Run for Dr. Simpkin, No. 4 Brook street. [Exit page, r. d. To maid]—You take off your mistress' bonnet, and make her more comfortable.

Maid, [retreating]—Lud, sir, I wouldn't touch her for the life of me!

Miranda—Perhaps I might be of use. The servant seems frightened.

Mr. C.—If your nerves can bear the strain. Lady Leslie is at Cheltenham, and her daughter out. There are none but servants at home.

[Miranda busies herself in arranging Miss H. more comfortably; applies salts, etc. Mr. C. stands looking down.]

Mr. C.—And this is the end of it all!

Miranda, [startled]—You don't mean she's dead?

Mr. C.—No, no, I hope not; but I fear she is much injured.

Miranda—Oh, why don't the doctor come? Does she belong to nobody?

Mr. C.—She has a father, you know.

Miranda—Ah, poor man! what will he do?

Mr. C., [shrugging his shoulders]—Bear it with astonishing fortitude. These ties are not always what you think, and they are neither of them, I fancy, capable of strong affections.

Miranda—I don't know about that. She looks unhappy; but she has a tender heart, for she cried at my singing.

[Mr. C. looks shocked. Enter page, r. d., followed by Mr. Gaunt.]

\*Page—Doctor Simpkin was out, sir; but I met this gentleman at the door, and he says *he* understands doctoring, too. [Exit page.]

Miranda—Mr. Gaunt!

Mr. Gaunt—To be sure; why not? The women-folks were bothering how to get you home, so I reported myself ready for detail duty, and they sent me here as escort. In the hall I found a lot of folks making a deuce of a row. What's up?

Miranda—Oh, I'm so glad you came! There's been a dreadful accident; the poor lady is hurt, and I am going to stay with her till her friends arrive. Please tell Sophie not to expect me till she sees me.

Mr. Gaunt—Hullo! turned sick nurse, eh? That's a new trade. Much harm done? Bones smashed, eh?

Mr. C.—The injury seems chiefly to the head.

[Mr. G. examines patient.]

Miranda, [aside to Mr. C.]—It is an artist who's been painting me and curing Sophy, and being very kind to us generally.

Mr. Gaunt, [who has been examining Miss Hitchcock closely]—Her color is improving; she'll pull through.

Miranda, [to Mr. C.]—Do you hear that? "She'll pull through!" and he knows. He walked the hospitals, and dissected people, and did everything that makes a man medical, before he took to painting. Poor lady! I'm so glad.

Mr. Gaunt, [to maid]—All you've got to do, is to sit by her; and wet her head with vinegar and water, in case she wanders, as she is very like to do, and on no account let her stir till the doctor comes.

Maid, [in a flurry]—Oh, lord sir—you needn't look at me sir! I wouldn't stay alone with *that*—not for a fortune! And nobody need expect it of me—neither, It wasn't put down in none of my characters—nor so much as *evened* to me—never, never! And the Doctor, he told me I wasn't ever to be frightened on account of my 'eart, which it do beat now, most dreadful.

Mr. Cressingham, [sternly]—Leave the room, woman? [Exit maid—l. d. All stare blankly at each other.]

Mr. Cressingham—What's to be done now?

Mr. Gaunt—She mustn't be left alone a minute—not a minute. Her life depends on nursing.

Miranda, [firmly]—Very well—I'll stay then!

Mr. Gaunt—Good girl! [Attends to Miss Hitchcock.]

Mr. C. [to Miranda]—I cannot bear to leave you in this way. Do you think you are surely strong enough?

Miranda—Yes. The poor thing must not be left alone. Alas how lonely some people are!

Mr. Cressingham—Not when visited by an angel! [Miss Hitchcock moves a little and groans.]

Miranda—Poor lady. She suffers!

Mr. C—I can hardly pity her—so guarded! I would almost change places with her if I thought I should open my eyes and find you there. Meantime I must go. We shall both be employed in the same work, for I must follow the father and break the news to him. You will think of me, won't you—while you are watching the daughter, and I am hurrying after the father? I like to believe that you will think of me! [Looks at her tenderly.]

Miranda, [softly]—Yes, I shall think of you! [Seats herself by the lounge. Exit Mr. Cressingham, c. d.]

Mr. Gaunt—Now I'll trot off after a doctor and nurse. She shows symptoms of fever and you musn't be left alone. Hullo—who's this young thunder gust? [Door opens violently, and lady Maria runs in, in walking dress, pale and breathless.]

Lady M.—I've only just heard—I'm so shocked! Is she killed? Is she hurt? What is it?

Miranda—Not killed, but very much injured.

Lady M.—What an awful shame!

Mr. Gaunt, [who has been watching her attentively]—Hullo, *Ariel*! Have the goodness to stand a little more in the light—so—[poses her.] Throw your chin up, please! [To Miranda] Congratulate me—my dear, I've found *Ariel*!

Lady Maria, [scared]—What is it, what does he do that for!

Miranda—Don't be alarmed—its his way. Lady Maria Leslie—Mr. Gaunt!

Lady M. [looking at Miranda] Good gracious, is it really you? My soprano? How awfully jolly, [glancing at lounge] How awfully dreadful—I mean.

Mr. Gaunt—Well, I'm no use here—so I'm off. When I come for you, you've got to go, d'ye hear? [To Miranda.]

Lady M.—Does it bite?

Miss Hitchcock [from lounge, in delirium] Too late, too late.

Lady M.—Oh gracious! Oh, how awfully horrid! What shall I do?

Mr. Gaunt, [gruffly] Be of use, like *her*. [indicating Miranda.]

Lady M.—Oh, I can't. I never was of use in my life!

Miss Hitchcock.—Too late, too late.

Lady M. [shivering] Oh don't, don't, Hannah,—its dreadful!

Mr. Gaunt, [severely]—Have you got a *thingamy* here!

Lady M.—A what?

Mr. Gaunt—A *thingamy*—are you deaf? A chariot, a coach and four—whatever young women like you go round in.



Lady M.—I'm driving, certainly.

Mr. G.—Well, may I take it a minute to bring a nurse and doctor ?

Lady M.—Oh, no, no, I dare'nt stay here. I should die of fright—I know I should !

Mr. Gaunt—Then come with me. You don't look half bad, and you wouldn't like your fiddle-faddles to stand in the way of saving a life, would you ?

Lady M.—Yes—I will. You don't look half bad, either ! [Exeunt hastily, r. d.]

Miranda, [looking down at Miss Hitchcock]—Poor thing ! How still she lies—hardly a breath ; and all the pain has gone from her face, not even the hardness left. Why, she is almost *beautiful*—and young—as young as I am ? I never thought of her being *young* before ! Poor young thing ! It must be true her lover does not love her—he would have been here the very first ! Hush—she is opening her eyes !

Miss Hitchcock [sits up, looking round wildly]—Arthur, where is Arthur ? I want Arthur !

Miranda—Shall I send for him ! I daresay he would come, where does he live ?

Miss Hitchcock [sinking back wearily]—Better not, better not. I might have won it once—it is too late now, too late. Hearts must be won—they can't be conquered ! Too late, too late ! [Starts up again.] Send that girl to me.

Miranda, [frightened]—What girl ?

Miss H.—The girl who sang at the dress-maker's,—who made me cry. I want to cry. I haven't cried for such a long, long time,—not since I was a child in my mother's arms. Mother, mother, tell her to sing to me.

Miranda, [soothingly, bending over her]—Yes, poor, dear lady, she shall sing to you. But will you be quiet, and try to sleep ?

Miss H. [piteously]—Will somebody hold me in their arms while she sings ? I'll be quiet there. It's so long since anybody held me in their arms. [Miranda takes her in her arms and sings softly. The curtain slowly descends.]

### ACT THIRD—SCENE SECOND.

(*Same drawing-room. Mr. Hitchcock and Miranda discovered ; latter seated.*)

Mr. H. [pompously]—Yes, as I was saying, I don't know how to thank you sufficiently for your kindness to my daughter. She would have felt it quite dreadful to have been left in the hands of maids and nurses, and, and *common* people, you know. It's unpleasant to have common people about one ; now isn't it ? My daughter always objects to common people, on principle. But she will be very much obliged to you. Such kindness in a stranger ; and *such* a stranger ! [bows and smiles,] is really quite unexpected.

Miranda—Oh, that is nothing ; I am glad I was here. But is she better to-day ?

Mr. H. [shrugging his shoulders]—Better, I believe. The doctor says she is going on well ; but it will be a most tedious business ; the inconvenience is much to be deplored. [Miranda looks surprised.] I must go out of town. I am really greatly to be pitted.

Miranda—*You ?*

Mr. H.—Yes ; you have no idea. An illness of this kind is a most inconvenient thing. I can't stand it ; nobody could ; *groaning*, you know, *noises*, that sort of thing—unpleasant, very. My nerves are exceedingly susceptible. Doctor says I have a peculiar organization ; can't stand being waked in the night, or annoyed in any way. And unfortunately our rooms happen to be

on the same floor. I always did have a feeling, a strong feeling, that she might just as well have gone up another flight of stairs. But then, I suppose, as mistress of the house,— However, it was very thoughtless, indeed, of her not to insist upon being carried up to her maid's room. But some people have no thought. Never can understand people's being so inconsiderate for others. It's a great inconvenience. I'm really to be pitied.

Miranda, [disgusted]—Does she suffer?

Mr. H.—She? Who? Suffer? What? Hannah, my daughter? I am really not prepared to answer. I suppose people *must* suffer who meet with accidents. It is really inconvenient; I am greatly to be pitied.

Miranda, [rising indignantly]—I think poor Miss Hitchcock is fifty times more to be pitied than you are! [Mr. H. looks dumbfounded.] I only called to inquire. I am glad she is improving. Good morning. [Walks towards door.]

Mr. Hitchcock—I beg your pardon, ma'am; I nearly forgot; Lady Maria Leslie desired me to say she would be right down, and she wished to see you very much. Some singing business, I believe.

Miranda—Oh, yes, I know; the charade. [Re-seats herself.] Very well, I'll wait.

Mr. Hitchcock—Well, if you'll excuse me, I won't. Luncheon is ready. No use to ask you in, I suppose?

Miranda, [coldly]—No, thank you.

Mr. H., [going, aside]—That's lucky; I only ordered a couple dozen fried oysters, and I feel rather peckish myself, this morning. [Door opens, l. d., and Lady Maria enters.] Ah, here comes the fairest of her sex—charming, as usual. Lady Maria, your slave has been entertaining your guest to the best of his poor ability.

Lady M.—I see she is looking bored. Pray don't let us detain you any longer, Mr. Hitchcock. You'll find your luncheon much better company. [Bows very grandly. Exit Mr. Hitchcock, l. d.]

Lady M., [looking after him]—Thank the Lord, *he's* disposed of. [To Miranda.] I'm ever and ever so glad to see you; but I'm so sick. Can you smoke?

Miranda—Smoke? What? Glass, or drawings, or what?

Lady Maria—Pipes. [Sinking languidly into a chair.]

Miranda [amazed]—Pipes?

Lady Maria—Yes, of course. Not real pipes; those are only for man-lucky man!—but cigarettes. Can you smoke them?

Miranda—No; indeed, I never tried.

Lady M.—Oh, I'm so disappointed! I thought, perhaps you'd know how to do it without choking. The smoke always will get into my nose and choke me. (Confidentially) I don't mind telling you, but I wouldn't have Lady Claude Malvers and the rest know it for *worlds*. Its dreadfully hard work keeping up with our set. I can't smoke, and I'm afraid of real wild horses, and hunting dogs paw you over so! I'd a great deal rather have a grey kitten.

Miranda—Then why do you try it?

Lady M.—Why, I must. It's good form; everybody does it. And some of the girls swear beautifully, too. Not real oaths, of course, but spirited, manly things, that make one seem so knowing. O dear, I do envy men so!

Miranda—You do? I think being a girl is delicious.

Lady M.—I don't see it. I wish I did. And the worst of it is, girls *have* to marry.

Miranda, [softly]—Yes, sometimes.

Lady M.—Sometimes? Why, it's the thing girls are born for.

Miranda—No, indeed; not unless—

Lady M.—Unless what?

Miranda, [embarrassed]—Surely you know what I mean. A girl must care for somebody very much before she consents to leave everything she loves for his sake.



Lady M., [disdainfully]—Is *that* all you know of it? Well, I wonder where you were reared!

Miranda—I'm sure my ideas are more common than yours.

Lady M.—How would you like to marry that Hitchcock, then?

Marinda—Marry who?

Lady M.—That Hitchcock: the old party that just went out.

Miranda—What, old Mr. Hitchcock, Miss Hitchcock's father?

Lady M.—Yes, old Mr. Hitchcock, Miss Hitchcock's father! How would you like to be that sweet young person's step-mamma?

Miranda—Why, not at all, of course. What young girl would?

Lady M.—Here's the fellow that's got to do it then! [Taps herself.]

Miranda—Oh, nonsense! How can you say such a thing!

Lady M.—I don't say I want to, but I've *got* to. It's expected of me, and I suppose I'll give in after I've had a good time flirting with the fellows. He *is* rich, you know, and it'll be such fun snubbing that scornful Hannah. I'm not sure, though, but it might aggravate her more if I refused him. What do you think?

Miranda.—You shouldn't let him propose at all. It must be dreadful to refuse a man,—especially an old one.

Lady M.—I've refused heaps of men! [Miranda opens her eyes.] I like it: especially if they take on pretty hard, get on their knees and roll up their eyes; that kind of thing, you know. It's a sort of revenge on them for being men when *I'm* only a woman. I'm going to make old Hitchy get on his knees when he proposes to me, and keep him there ever so long, while I make up my mind. And I shouldn't wonder if I say "No," after all. [Suddenly] I say, that beast of yours didn't bite.

Miranda—Beast of mine? What can you mean?

Lady M.—Doesn't it belong to you? That wild man of the woods I carried off in my carriage that day. I thought it did. He ordered me around, [I love to be ordered around!] and took me to a hospital here, and a house there, and filled up my "*thingamy*," as he called it, with nurses and doctors, without "by your leave," or "with your leave," and scolded me all the time because I didn't want to sit for Ariel, in short hair. How *I'd* look in short hair! But he didn't bite. I think he is a very nice beast.

Miranda—He is very kind to Sophy and me.

Lady M.—Has he got any name? What do they call him? Does he hang out at the Zoo?

Miranda—His name is Gaunt.

Lady M.—And what is he, if he's not a beast?

Miranda—He is an artist, a member of the Royal Academy.

Lady M. [jumping up]—An artist, and his name Gaunt—Richard Gaunt? [Miranda nods head.] Oh, you're laughing at me? You are not going to tell me that *that's* Gaunt, the painter?

Miranda—I suppose so.

Lady M. [clapping hands]—Well, I am astonished; never more astonished in my life. So that was Gaunt, the painter, and I had a tete-a-tete drive with him, and he wants to put me in the great Shaksperian picture the town is raving about. What an honor! All the girls will be green with jealousy. I'd no more idea of it. Don't you know, I'm wild about art. How glad I am I said he was a *nice* beast. [Enter Page, with hand organ.] What's that, Benjie? Oh, the hand organ. So lucky I ordered it brought in here, for we've forgotten all about the charade.

Miranda—Sure enough, the charade. Describe it, please.

Lady M.—Well the word is Ireland, and somebody has to be dreadfully angry. That's *Ire*, you know. So we have that old fellow who makes pianos calculate and can't bear a noise; let's see, what's his name? It rhymes to something—*Cabbage*, yes, that's it; Cabbage, Babbage. Well, Babbage is sitting at his piano, making it play sums; [horrid idea, isn't it!] when all of

a sudden all the London noises commence right under his window. There's where *you* are to come in—you're one of the noises—you sing a ballad to a creaky, creaky organ. How shall you like that ?

Miranda—I think it'll be great fun.

Lady M.—So do I; only I call it awfully jolly. Why don't you ? *Great fun's* tame. [Mr. Cressingham is seen behind r. d.] Well, Babbage gets into such a precious state of rage that he forswears earth and goes to sea to be quiet. And lo and behold, up comes a wind, and there's no end of a storm, and he's no end of a coward, and presently he's wrecked. So he's awfully glad when he gets to shore again, and throws himself flat and kisses the ground. That's Land, you know.

Miranda—But the sea part must be difficult to act ?

Lady M.—Not at all. It's done with millions and millions of yards of green baize on rollers, and the wagonette for a ship. We just stagger up and down, like this, [imitates sailors' walk,] and try to get our—what do they call it ?—*sea-feet* ? no ; *sea-legs* on.

Miranda—And how do you do, *Ireland* ?

Lady M.—Oh that's easy enough ! We just have two processions that come tearing along the minute the poor old thing is safe on shore, with flags and stones and shillelahs and everything, and they set to work fighting, and kill each other right off. And when there's nothing but heaps of dead men round him, orange heaps and green heaps—two processions and both of them dead, poor Babbage finds out that London is the best place after all.

Miranda, [laughing heartily]—Oh, it will be splendid !

Lady M.—I did think of bringing in the two Kilkenny cats who fought till there was nothing left but the fluff at the ends of their tails because they really were Irish and it would have given an air of reality to the scene. But mamma said she would not be among the audience if we had fighting cats. Besides I don't *quite* see how we could have managed it !

Miranda—Nor I either, I'm sure !

Lady M.—So I suppose we had better give it up. And now, will you practice your song ? I've got the most delicious hand organ: as creaky as possible, all out of tune, and doing everything under the sun it should'n't do—bless it ! And you are to sing to it, perfectly in tune. Now then ! [Lady M. turns the crank and Miranda sings. Business. As the song ends, Mr. Cressingham taps the door lightly and walks in.]

Lady M. [jumping up]—What, *you*, cousin Arthur ? How uncommonly jolly. [Mr. Cressingham takes no notice of her—but shakes hands with Miranda.] What could bring you here at an hour when you are not usually, out of bed ?

Mr. Cressingham, [annoyed]—Nonsense ! [To Miranda tenderly] Mr. Hitchcock told me I should find *you* here, so I ventured to intrude.

Miranda, [shyly]—I am afraid I must be going.

Mr. Cressingham—I was fortunate in hearing your song.

Lady M.—Oh, you've been eavesdropping, then !

Mr. Cressingham, [coolly]—Yes, I've been standing outside that door for the last half hour listening to every word you said.

Lady M. [tauntingly]—Hoping to hear us discuss your highness, and we never mentioned your name. What a sell !

Mr. Cressingham, [gravely]—Not at all. I should have been sorry if you had. To tell the truth, Maria, I was disgusted with your ideas of matrimony—and the vulgarity of the language you use. You are really a lady. What is the use of pretending you are not ?

Lady Maria, [tossing her head]—Fudge !

Mr. C.—*Fudge* is'n't argument.

Lady M.—No more's scolding ! Arthur, you are such a prig.

Mr. C.—There it is again ! Every other word you use is slang.

Lady M. [bursting into tears]—You are a mean, cross, hateful fellow, and

I won't stay here to be insulted—before a stranger, too. [Rushes to door] And *you* needn't preach, cousin Arthur ! There are worse peccadilloes than slarg in this world. [exit l. d, weeping.]

Miranda—What did she mean ? She looked right at me.

Mr. C.—Oh, never mind her ! [Advancing nearer] I have something to say to you—something I have wished to say—almost from the first moment we met, and I must say it now, because I am about to leave London.

Miranda, [faltering]—To leave London !

Mr. C.—You may be sure I should not go, unless I was compelled. But it will only be a few days—on business. Nevertheless, I cannot go without speaking—for who knows what might happen—even in a few days ? [An agitated pause.]

Miranda, [timidly]—But what is it you wish to say ?

Mr. C.—Ay, what is it ? Dare I tell you ? Can you assure me I dare tell you ? I have sought you here on purpose—and I stand before you—the veriest coward that ever crawled upon the earth !

Miranda—You, a coward !

Mr. C.—Do you believe in love at first sight ?

Miranda—In love at first sight ? Oh no, indeed, nobody does.

Mr. C.—I do.

Miranda—But love must be founded on respect, esteem, knowledge of character.

Mr. C.—Then why is it *love*—not friendship, or calm, fraternal regard ? No, believe me dear,—*love*—man's love for woman, comes in a moment, divin-  
ing character and *itself* laying the foundation for the esteem you speak of.

Miranda, [shyly, looking up, then down again]—Does it ? [A pause. He advances still closer and bends over her.]

Mr. C.—I love you ! [Miranda involuntarily extends her hands, then draws back again. Mr. C. catches them both in his.]

Mr. C.—My darling, my darling, you love me ?

Miranda, [simply, looking up for an instant, then dropping head on his shoulder,]—Yes, I love you, I think I was born loving you ! [Tableau, *No kissing.*]

Mr. C., [lifting her face in both hands and looking down at it]—And now, my own darling, only think, I don't know your Christian name.

Miranda—Miranda.

Mr. C.—What a sweet name, and so exactly your own. But we must change the other part very soon ; it must not long be *Miranda Style*.

Miranda, [starting back in terror]—Oh, I had forgotten ! I had forgotten ! It's all over, all, all over ! I am not Miss Style, and you wont wish to—I mean, you wont like me again. I am not Miss Style ; I am an imposter. I am a dressmaker.

Mr. C.—You are not Miss Style ; you are an imposter ! My dear love, are you mad ? Or do you believe that I am a fool, and believe everything that is said to him ?

Miranda, [wildly]—You *must* believe me ; I am telling you the simple, miserable truth. But I didn't mean it ; it was all a joke ; I never thought about it when I was with you ; I was thinking only about you, of course, and I never guessed—I never dreamed, that you—that you *liked* me ; you know I didn't ; or I would have told you at once. I never, never meant to deceive you an instant. Oh, you must believe me when I say that.

Mr. C.—Be calm, my dearest ; I will believe anything. But what in heaven's name does it all mean ?

Miranda—Oh, I am not your dearest ; I am a dressmaker.

Mr. C.—A dressmaker ?

Miranda—Of course I am a lady. Papa was a clergyman, but he died so poor ; and Sophy did not like teaching, so we work for Mme. la Gai.

Mr. C.—Where I met you ?

Miranda—Yes, where I met you ; and I went to the ball in Miss Hitchcock's wedding dress.

Mr. C., [pinches himself, staring]—I feel the pain ; I am not asleep. Am I going mad ?

Miranda, [distracted]—No, no, you are not mad ; don't look at me so ! You are only hearing just what I say. Oh, don't speak to me as you did to Maria : I shall *die* if you speak to me so ! I had just finished the dress, and I was so silly, I put it on ; and there was a ball next door, and I slipped out and slipped in and followed Mrs. Nesbitt up stairs. Oh, the joy of it ! Oh, how beautiful it was !

Mr. C., [catching her in his arms]—My darling, what does it matter *who* you are ? It is yourself that I love, whatever your name may be.

Miranda—And you love me just the same, whether I am Miss Style the heiress, or Miranda Maxwell, the milliner ?

Mr. C.—Maxwell ? Did you say *Maxwell* ? Can it be possible that your father was the Rev. Mr. Maxwell, of Brookfield ?

Miranda—The very same.

Mr. C.—Then I have heard of him all my life. He was my uncle's dearest college friend.

Miranda—How wonderful ! Then, after all, we are family friends. How delightfully everything always does turn out !

Mr. C.—Never till *now*—now always. When once I shall have seen Miss Hitchcock and arranged *that* business, I shall give my whole heart up to the only real, satisfying happiness this short life of ours can ever know.

Miranda, [looking up]—*Short* life ? It seems to me like a lovely, endless valley, that at last only melts into the skies.

Mr. C., [looking at her reverently]—My thoughts are not angels' thoughts like yours.

Miranda—But why did you speak of Miss Hitchcock ? What business have you with her, poor thing ?

Mr. C.—My love, have you forgotten ?

Miranda—Forgotten ? Why, was she deceived, too ? She does not suppose I am Miss Style, does she !

Mr. C.—Well, yes, she does ; though I don't see what that has to do with it.

Miranda—And your cousin, Lady Maria, also ?

Mr. C.—Yes ; they all think so. The dress-maker evidently misled them. Maria told us next day she had asked if you were not a lady in disguise, and M'me La Gai had nodded her head and looked very wise.

Miranda—So that is what Miss Hitchcock meant by accusing me of masquerading. I thought she knew about the wedding-dress, and was in such a fright !

Mr. C. [smiling]—See what it is to have a guilty conscience !

Miranda—And what *you* meant by saying I was engaged. The real Miss Style *is* engaged ; I saw it in the paper.

Mr. C.—So did I ; Miss Hitchcock herself showed it to me, and her design nearly succeeded. Though it wasn't a fraud, as I suspected, but a mistake, all around.

Miranda—Miss Hitchcock's design ? I, I don't understand.

Mr. C.—It's plain enough. She saw how matters stood, and she wanted to put a quietus on my hopes at once.

Miranda—But why should she be so spiteful ? You never harmed her, did you ?

Mr. C.—My love, have you really forgotten I was engaged to Miss Hitchcock, and the empty form, it was never anything more, must be broken off ? I should have done it before I spoke to you, but for this unlucky accident.

Miranda, [incredulously]—Engaged to Miss Hitchcock ? You ?

Mr. C.—Yes, of course ; you have known it from the first ; you knew it before we met.



Miranda, [in a quick, querulous tone]—*You engaged to Miss Hitchcock?* But Mr. Cressingham—surely it was *Mr. Cressingham* they said?

Mr. C. [startling back]—Great God! It is not possible! you must know—there cannot be a double misunderstanding! Why do you look so? Why do you speak so? You must know that *I* am Arthur Cressingham!

Miranda—*You!* [A deep pause.]

Miranda, [in a cold, hard tone]—You are Mr. Cressingham; you are engaged to Miss Hitchcock?

Mr. C.—Yes, yes.

Miranda—Then you are *not* engaged to me.

Mr. C.—My darling, don't say so. *I am* engaged to you, doubly, trebly engaged to you.

Miranda, [dreadfully]—Oh, no; you are hers; you are not mine; I will not have you.

Mr. C.—You -- will -- not -- have -- me?

Miranda, [wringing her hands]—Oh, no; you are not true; you are double faced. You are hers; you are not mine!

Mr. C.—*I am* yours, by every law, human and divine, Miranda, and I will not give you up.

Miranda, [reproachfully]—And my life arises from *her* death; the death of her hopes and happiness! Oh, no, never! You have promised yourself to her, and you must have her.

Mr. C.—That I will *not*! I will go to her; I will ask her to release me; she will consent; [aside—she *shall* consent this time, by God!] and then I will come to you and you will accept me.

Miranda—No, I shall not. (Staggering towards the door.) Let me go; I can't bear this any longer; my heart is breaking!

Mr. C. (fiercely)—You have no heart! You do not love me!

Miranda (quietly)—Oh, yes; I love you; did I not tell you so? Love can not change, can it? I suppose I shall love you forever, shall I not?

Mr. C. (tries to embrace her)—My darling, you shall not leave me!

Miranda, (avoiding him and tottering towards the door)—Let me go! (Mr. C. places himself between her and door.)

Mr. C.—Will you marry me?

Miranda—No, sir; I will not.

Mr. C.—Because I am not *good*?

Miranda—Yes; because you have deceived me, and deceived that other. She loves you; oh, yes, I know very well she loves you. I will not be happy on her misery.

Mr. C. (imploringly)—But I am miserable, too. Have you no thought for *me*,—not even a *tear*, Miranda?

Miranda, (touching her eyes)—A tear? Am I not crying? Ah, how happy I used to be when I cried! I suppose I shall never shed any more tears again. Let me go; let me go.

Mr. C.—Go! But if you love me, you will return. If you do not, I must bear my misery as best I may. (Miranda returns slowly from door. She lays her hand on his arm and raises the other towards heaven, solemnly.)

Miranda—You must marry her, if she will, and make her happy, if you can, and then, oh, my dearest, if you do this, I think God will! let us love each other in heaven!

[Tableau—Curtain falls.]

## ACT THIRD—SCENE THIRD.

(*Miranda's room as before. Miranda discovered, in a white wrapper, pale and languid, sewing in rear of stage. Mrs. Green and Mr. Gaunt in front.*)

Mrs. Green, [to Mr. Gaunt]—Not a bite or sup has she took this blessed day; nor so much as a canary'd peck at, since I found her that evening—it's a week come Wednesday—a lying there in a huddle on the floor, moaning to herself like, and *pale*--ghosts aint a circumstance to her.

Mr. Gaunt--And you can't find out the trouble?

Mrs. G.--She declares she's well, and she never sheds a tear, and smiles up in my face so cheerful, it's fit to break your heart; and all day long she waits on her sister, and sings to her, and tidies up the room, so light-footed and chipper, you'd never guess anything was wrong, except for her white face and the queer stare she's got in her eyes, like as if she wasn't thinking of anything, you know.

Mr. G.--It's a great pity that Miss Sophy is still too weak to talk to her. I suspect it's one of those wounds you womankind, with your wheedling, coaxing nonsense, understand better than the whole college of physicians. [Aside, fiercely.] If only I could lay my hands on the wretch who has played her false, what a throttling he'd get! I knew there was a man at the bottom of it when her eyes got that shining light in them, and her innocent little face took to dimpling over with such unexpected smiles and blushes. And [glancing back] the Lord help the poor child! the trail of the serpent is plainer than ever now. [Aloud to Miranda.] Well, my dear, since you don't feel strong enough to give me a sitting to-day, I'll take myself and my portfolio off.

Mrs. G.--Yes, and I'll just step down to my kitchen to broil you a chicken wing to peck at, my lamb. Miss Sophy's coming to dinner to-day, and we must celebrate her recovery by something especially splendid.

Miranda, (rising languidly) -- Ah, I had forgotten sissy was coming down to-day. We must make the room presentable. Will you help me to pack the dress to send to M<sup>me</sup> La Gai? It's finished at last. (Aside, mournfully) *Finished--finished!*

Mrs. Green, (bustling around) -- Surely, of course. Here's the box it came in, (producing large paste-board box,) and here is the dress (uncovering dress and taking it down from peg). I'll fetch the underskirts in half a minute. (Exit r. d.)

Mr. Gaunt.--By-the-by, you havn't seen Ariel lately, have you?

Miranda, [languidly] -- Ariel? Oh, you mean Lady Maria Leslie. No, not for a long time; not since last Wednesday.

Mr. Gaunt--That's just the way with these midgets of fashion. Out of sight, out of mind. I thought I saw something better in her face. Heaven knows it was pretty enough for an angel's! [Sighs.] But they are all tarred with the same stick--daubed with the same paint brush, perhaps I'd better say, seeing they are ladies of fashion. [During this remark, the c. d. has opened, and Lady Maria stands listening.]

Lady Maria, [entering gaily, followed by Lady Leslie] -- Who's that maligning us so cruelly? We are just in time to defend ourselves. Mumsey, this is Mr. Gaunt, the great Mr. Gaunt, and his bark is a great deal worse than his bite! [They bow and converse in pantomime.]

Lady M. [running back to Miranda and leading her forward] -- Did my dear soprano really think I had forgotten her? When I came back that afternoon and found you gone so unexpectedly, I was for following you on the spot, but



Arthur prevented me. But now that I know all—a dozen Arthurs would not prevent me from coming to tell you what a dear little heroine you are, and how I love you !

Miranda, [starting back]—All ?

Lady M.—Yes, *all* ! How you accepted him and refused him, so I flew on the wings of the wind, being Ariel you know Mr. Gaunt ; and here I am. [Confidentially] And oh, my dear, I must tell you ; its too good to keep ; old Hitchy popped this very morning, knees and all, and I left him there—I did indeed!—and sent mamma to tell him I could'nt possibly ; so he took the noon-train for Scotland, and its good ridlance of bad rubbish ! [Looking at her suddenly] How pale and sick you look, dear ! But I've brought you some company that will bring the color to those pretty cheeks again ! Why, see how she trembles ! Come Mr. Gaunt, you promised to show me your studio sometime, and I'm dying to see it—so is mamma. Show us now, please, and let us leave Miss Maxwell in peace to receive her company.

Mr. Gaunt, [smiling]—Why, what an impetuous young person it is ? But if I show you my studio, its only on condition you give me the sittings I asked for—not *one* mind you ; but as many as I want. [To audience] And it will go hard with Richard Gaunt if that's *all* he asks for, and gets too, before the picture is finished ! [Looking at her earnestly] Come, is it a bargain ? [Lady Maria hesitates a moment, looks down, then up, at last, coquettishly.]

Lady M.—Ask Mamma !

Lady Leslie, [shocked]—My dear ! [Mr. Gaunt gives an arm to each lady and leads them off triumphantly, l. d.]

Miranda, [standing in centre of stage and listening breathlessly.]—What can she mean ? Who is coming ! Oh, my heart, my heart ! [Enter Miss Hitchcock, c. d. Miranda falls back a step, gazing at her alarmed.]

Miss Hitchcock, [gently]—Are you afraid of me, Miss Maxwell ! [Miranda tries to speak, but can not.]

Miss H. [advancing and taking her hand]—Surely you are not afraid of me ?

Miranda—No, I am not afraid of you, Miss Hitchcock. There is no reason why I should be ?

Miss H.—Scarcely. I have come to thank you for watching by me when no one else would. The doctor says you saved my life.

M.—Did I really ? I am very glad.

Miss H.—Glad ? And yet my life stood in the way of your own happiness.

Miranda—As if *that* would make any difference !

Miss H. [gently]—And is that *all* I have to thank you for ? Or did you try to preserve something else for me, more precious still ? [Miranda is much embarrassed.]

Miss H. [advancing and throwing an arm round her]—My dear during that long, peaceful sleep, to which your soft voice lulled me, I think my good angel came and took away my stormy, rebellious heart and gave me in its stead an humbler one, better able to appreciate angelic goodness and generosity. [Kisses her forehead.] When I awoke, it was with a new realization of life, and a new object for my future, if indeed any future was to be mine. And I realized nothing so plainly as that Arthur Cressingham and Hannah Hitchcock made a great mistake when they promised to marry one another. [Miranda catches back of chair, listening intently.] And so the first thing I did when he returned to town this morning, was to send for him, and tell him so.

Miranda—But you love him. I know it ; I feel it !

Miss H. (interrupting her by a gesture)—Yes, you are right ; I love him ; I always loved him ; I shall always love him. But to marry him would break my heart—*now* ! Love is not all of life, believe me, whatever the poets say. There are other duties and other joys for us who have missed the sweetest. I shall find my niche in the world, and be happy there : do not fear for me. And *you*, (turning to side) Arthur, come and tell this little girl what *her*

niche in life is to be ! (Enter Arthur, c. d. The lovers stand looking at each other a moment.)

Mr. C.—Do you reject me again, Miranda ?

Miranda, (laying her hand in his)—No ; I am yours forever, since you are free to be mine.

Miss H.—And see, here lies your wedding-dress ! (Picking up dress.) It is a perfect fit, you know, and only requires *this* (taking veil and wreath from table) to be complete. (Puts veil, etc., on Miranda.)

Miranda—So you know that, too ?

Miss H.—Yes ; I know all, all. (Advancing between them, and clasping their hands in hers.) And I know also, that the love which commences in self-abnegation, and is founded on a mutual esteem and confidence, ends only where that higher love, which endureth forever, begins !

Mrs. Green, (entering r. d, skirts over arm)—Here they are — (starts back.) Stars and garters and little fishes ! [Retreating.] I ax your pardon, Miss. I didn't know there were strangers here.

Miranda, [turning around]—Is that you, dear Mrs. Green ? Don't go ; there are no strangers here ; we are all friends.

Mr. Gaunt, [entering, followed by Lady Maria]—If that's the case, we may as well come too ! [Advancing to M.] My dear young lady, I'm glad to see your color is improved. [Indicating Mr. Cressingham] I guess for *your* disease there is but one kind of medicine necessary—and I hope [shaking hands] it's good effects will last through life !

Lady M. [saucily]—Don't mind his calling you a *dose*, cousin Arthur ! I'm a dose, too—and he's taken me ! [Puts hand in Mr. Gaunt's ]

[Lady Leslie—appearing at c. d.—holds up hands in mute horror.]

Mr. C. [advancing towards Lady L.]—Don't be shocked, annt Leslie, she's Ariel, you know, "a tricky sprite." Reconcile yourself to the inevitable. Love is a contagious disease, they say. Come, let me introduce to you your niece—my wife, that is to be ! [Leads her to Miranda, who embraces her affectionately.]

Lady M.—And since introductions are in order, Mr. Gaunt, let me introduce you to your—ghost ! (Introduces Miranda.)

Mr. Gaunt and Mrs. Green, (simultaneously)—Ghost !

Miranda—Ah, my friends, I've a long, beautiful fairy tale to tell you, one of these days—a new Cinderella story, full of ghosts and fairies and enchantment—but, meantime, let me introduce to you the Prince, (slipping hand in Mr. C's arm,) and (putting hand around Miss H's waist) the Fairy God-mother ! (Curtain falls.)



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